

Rep. Laura Ruderman

45th District

Education

Last year, voters passed two landmark education initiatives to reduce class sizes and give teachers fairer pay.

Despite the initiatives' \$800 million price tag and the state's \$1.6 billion budget deficit, we found a way to keep faith with the people on these two initiatives by fully funding them in the budget. Although we couldn't exempt education from cuts completely, we kept your priorities in mind, as expressed through your vote on those initiatives, as we wrote the budget.



Keeping in Touch

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**Representative
Laura Ruderman
45th District**
PO Box 40600
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2002 Session Report



Representative

Laura Ruderman

45th District

2002 Session Report

Dear neighbors,

I believe you deserve a Legislature and a Representative that listens to you and works to solve everyday problems.

Over the last several years, we've gotten some good things done on important issues like health care and higher education. But until this year, solutions to some of our biggest problems (like traffic) had eluded us. And the terrorist attack of Sept 11th, as well as the recession, presented us with some new challenges. Inside this newsletter, I'll hit some highlights, and what they mean to us in the 45th District:

- What local projects are in the transportation plan?
- How did the Legislature balance the budget with no new taxes?
- Are the two education initiatives funded in the budget?

This newsletter isn't meant to be a comprehensive review of the legislative session. Due to timing and space constraints, these newsletters tend to be fairly general. If you have specific questions about other topics, or want more detail on what's inside, please call, write, or email. There's nothing more important to me than hearing directly from the citizens I represent. Thank you for the honor and privilege of serving as your representative. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

REP. LAURA RUDERMAN
45th District

Committees:

Technology,
Telecommunications and Energy
(Vice Chair),
Appropriations, Health Care

Keeping in touch

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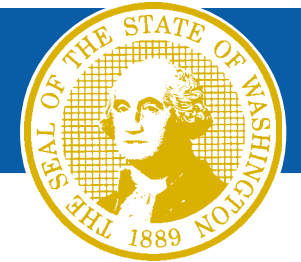
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Solving traffic gridlock

No matter what part of the district you live in – from Kirkland to Carnation – traffic congestion affects your life. And whether you call, write, email, or stop me in the grocery store, you've told me loud and clear that we need to invest in improving our transportation system. But I've also heard that you want a clear picture as to what projects will be funded, what kind of accountability measures there will be, and that you want a direct say in whether or not you think the package is worth paying a higher gas tax. I'm happy to say that we respected that request, and that you will get to vote on the statewide transportation plan this November.

How you vote on the plan is your choice; I won't tell you whether to vote yes or no.

I will tell you why I voted for the statewide package, what local projects are in the plan, and about four other major pieces of transportation legislation.

Ending gridlock in Olympia and our highways

It's no mystery why we have some of the worst traffic in the nation. While our state population boomed, our transportation system didn't. The state Department of Transportation lost touch with the people, and no-win arguments between roads and transit stalled progress. This session, we finally ended the bickering. No more delays or excuses. We got it done. The highlights:

- Reforms and efficiencies – We passed the Blue Ribbon Commission's ideas for making the transportation system more efficient and accountable.
- Regional solutions – Citizens in King, Snohomish and Pierce counties can now band together to solve area traffic jams.



- Narrows Bridge – One of the most dangerous and choked-up bottlenecks in our state will finally get relief, and a new financing plan will save the state millions of dollars.

- Statewide plan – A common-sense approach with a mix of solutions: more highways, more mass transit, and more tax incentives for cheap and effective solutions like carpooling and vanpooling.

Big hidden taxes vs. small cost

When making a decision, most business people do a cost-benefit analysis. A big reason I voted for the transportation reforms and plans is that doing nothing costs us far more in money and time than any solution on the table.

Right now, traffic gridlock costs each one of us about \$930 a year in hidden costs like wear and tear on our cars and gasoline, and 53 hours a year in wasted time.

It doesn't take an accountant to compare \$930 if we do nothing with less than \$60 a year in gas taxes for a solution (12,000 miles/20mpg=600 gallons *9cents=\$54).

Safer highways

Another reason I voted yes was safety. Traffic accidents are the No. 1 killer of children and young adults. No matter what your age, you're three times more likely to get crippled or killed driving to work in the morning than at the hands of a criminal.

And congestion makes it harder for emergency personnel to get to accident victims. State Troopers say unclogging traffic will go a long way toward making our highways safer for everyone.



So what's in it for us? – local projects

State Route 520

- \$100 million to continue making progress towards a solution for 520.
- \$70 million for additional lanes for the West Lake Sammamish Parkway to State Route 202.
- \$3.6 million for the I-5/SR 520 interchange.

State Route 522

- \$40 million in the Woodinville vicinity for taking Paradise Lake Road from two lanes to four lanes and dividing the highway.
- Paradise Lake Road: doubling the lanes on SR 522. Also extending the on- and off-ramps at SR 9, providing better conditions to enter the highway.

I-405 and SR-167

- \$8 million to fund improvements along the length of 405. I-405 is second only to I-5 as the most-traveled highway in the state. A 56 percent increase in traffic is predicted by 2020.
- \$1.77 billion for additional lanes on I-405 between Tukwila and Lynnwood.

Balancing the budget – with no new taxes

Over the last 30 years, each decade seems to have started in a recession. And no matter who was in charge, the solution was to raise general taxes like property taxes and sales taxes. And in the last several years, even without a recession or terrorist attacks, the Legislature has gone into double or triple overtime to pass a budget.

This year we ended both traditions, and got out of Olympia on time and without raising your sales or property taxes. Instead, we made tough cuts, limited spending in a time of increasing need, and used some creative thinking to tap resources other than your wallet.

It's interesting to play "what if" with the budget. You can visit the *Seattle Times* website for a hands-on chance to balance the budget.

<http://seattletimes.nwsources.com/budget/>.



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